

Peer Review Plan for the Species Report for the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-Grouse

About the Documents

Titles:

- 1) Species Report for the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-Grouse

Description of Documents:

This report analyzes the current status and trends of the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of the greater sage-grouse (hereafter Bi-State DPS). The Bi-State DPS currently occurs within six Population Management Units (PMUs) that border the Nevada-California State line. The PMUs represent generalized subpopulations or local breeding complexes and were delineated based on aggregations of leks, known seasonal habitats, and telemetry data. In 2013, we published a proposed rule to list the species as threatened with a 4(d) rule; we also proposed to designate critical habitat. However, in 2015, we published a withdrawal of our proposed listing rule and our proposed critical habitat rule. Our assessment indicated that the threats to the Bi-State DPS and its habitat, given current and future conservation efforts, were reduced such that listing was not necessary for the Bi-State DPS. In 2016, Desert Survivors, Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians, and Western Watersheds Project filed a complaint for declaratory and injunctive relief, alleging that our determination on the Bi-State DPS violated the Act. On August 24, 2018, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California issued an order Re: Summary Judgment vacating the listing withdrawal and remanding to the Service its final determination for reconsideration. The Court's order directs the Service to make a new listing decision by October 1, 2019.

This Species Report is an updated version of the 2015 Species Report. It is intended to be an in-depth review of the species' biology and threats, as well as existing and ongoing conservation measures.

About the Peer Review Process

Type of Review: Individual letters

Number of reviewers: The peer review process will include written requests for peer review from five peer reviewers.

Selection of Peer Reviewers: The Service will select peer reviewers based on their expertise with the subject matter.

Reviewer expertise: Expertise that will be sought for the review includes familiarity with the life history, threats, and habitat requirements for the Bi-State DPS of the greater sage-grouse, as well as experts in sagebrush ecosystems, general sage-grouse ecology, and bird conservation.

Estimated start date of peer review: March 19, 2019.

About Public Participation

Opportunities for the Public: We are reopening the comment period on the proposed rule, with an anticipated 60-day public comment period starting in April or May 2019. The proposed rule

identifies specific information requested from the public. Public comments are to be submitted electronically through www.regulations.gov.

Contact:

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